

Historic Foundation Proposal

Bids were opened on a project to remove the tracks, which run from the mouth of Provo Canyon to Heber City.

However, the commission last week heard a Wasatch Chamber of Commerce member ask to save the trackage north of Wildwood, located 13 miles up the canyon.

Bids Held

The bids have been held for two weeks while the Wasatch Railway Museum and Foundation, Inc., and the Wasatch Chamber of Commerce prepared a feasibility report for the commission concerning the advantages of the steam tourist railway.

A survey by the foundation shows a steam tourist railroad through Provo Canyon would increase tourism in Central Utah.

Looking to the future, Jay R. Edwards, foundation president, said the state is promoting what may well become the largest outdoor recreation attraction in the Intermountain area, the Wasatch Mountain State Park, northwest of Deer Creek Reservoir.

This park, expected to be completed within eight years, will contain a multi-million-dollar winter ski and summer resort complex, he said.

The Utah State Division of Parks and Recreation of the Department of National Resources, he said, has expressed interest over the possibility of constructing a scenic railroad from the present Heber branch line to the ski resort complex planned for the park.

The stream tourist railroad, which could be used year-round, would aid parking problems in the resort area and create a summer activity, he added.

Four Engines

The Museum Foundation now owns four steam locomotives, each rare and exceptional exhibit material, said Mr. Edwards.

Other equipment already acquired includes four passenger cars, a caboose, tools and essential spare parts and artifacts from railroad history, available for museum display.

Planned in the venture are three railroad stations, at Heber City, Wildwood and the proposed Swiss Village, in the Wasatch Mountain State Park.

Mr. Edwards said that once the railway would be in operation, an "Old West town" could be developed on the land area west of Heber City. Restaurants, opera houses, antique and souvenir shops and motels, along with other recreation and entertainment facilities would be available.

Phase Two

The foundation expects to build the railway in three phases, beginning with the railway between Heber City and Wildwood. Headquarters

of the museum would be in Heber City, the station providing an exhibit area for museum material.

Phase two, to be developed in six to eight years, would include construction of a railway line to the Swiss Village from Heber City. The train would run year-round to the facilities in the Wasatch Mountain State Park.

Phase three would connect Heber City with the Union Pacific trackage at Park City, providing tourists and residents contact to another resort area.

Total estimated cost of the project is \$684,502.50 — which includes new trackage, more equipment, insurance and opening costs. In estimating revenues for the first year, the foundation determined that approximately \$275,812.50 would be brought in from persons using the railroad.

As to financing the project, the foundation suggested five methods, which are now under consideration and in the early stages of development.

They include:

1. Leasing the museum to a private stock holder company.

2. The Economic Development Administration participation program acting jointly with local banks to finance the railroad on a pure loan basis.

3. The EDA participating in

the form of a loan plus an actual grant.

4. The Four Corners Regional Commission and the EDA jointly aiding the project.

5. Utah State retaining ownership of the trackage until the note is paid in full.

Economic Growth

Leon Ritchie, president of the Wasatch Chamber of Commerce, said the steam tourist railroad would bring in revenue year-round — enabling Wasatch, Summit and Utah Counties to grow economically.

He noted that more than 100 steam tourist railroads are operating in the United States. None to date, is relying on state aid, he said.

E. M. McLaughlin, secretary-treasurer of the foundation, said in a letter to Mr. Ritchie, that museum officials have been told time and time again by responsible businessmen and tourist-minded state officials that the Provo to Heber City trackage is the most ideal and desirable location for the development of a steam tourist railway in all of Utah.

"The Provo-Heber area has everything needed to support an important tourist project of this type. The wealth of scenery, excellent highway access, other developments

for tourists — Homestead and Wasatch Mountain State Park — as well as the highly important Wasatch Front population centers from which to draw for initial patronage support, required in a railway of this type," he said.

Begin in 1971

If the State Road Commission approves the plan for the railroad, the facility would begin operating at the beginning of the 1971 tourist season.

Construction of the proposed highway through Provo Canyon will not reach Wildwood for two years — fiscal year 1973. During this time the railroad could be in operation, Mr. Edwards said, giving foundation members a chance to investigate a successful steam tourist railroad in Utah.

The Wasatch Chamber of Commerce and the Wasatch County Commission met Saturday morning and agreed to ask the State Road Commission for permission to use the abandoned railroad between Heber and Deer Creek Dam.

The Wasatch Steam Museum plans to bring in equipment in the near future and begin operations in the spring of next year.

The group feels the project will be a big tourist attraction that will benefit the State of Utah and Wasatch County.

Railroad Steams Into Plans of Canyon

S.L. Tribune Thurs 10 Sep 1970 C-15

By Irene Jones

Tribune Staff Writer

HEBER CITY — Since the famed "Heber Creeper" died earlier this year, rusting railroad tracks winding up through Provo Canyon await their probable destruction.

Coming to the rescue, maybe, will be the Wasatch Mountain Railway, a steam tourist railroad planned by the Wasatch Railway Museum and Foundation, Inc., Salt Lake City.

The right-of-way owned by the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad has been purchased by the Utah State Road Commission.

Edwin E. Lovelace, State Highway Department District 6 engineer, has announced that construction of the first phase of a proposed expressway through Provo Canyon has been delayed, at least until next spring.

Too Late This Year

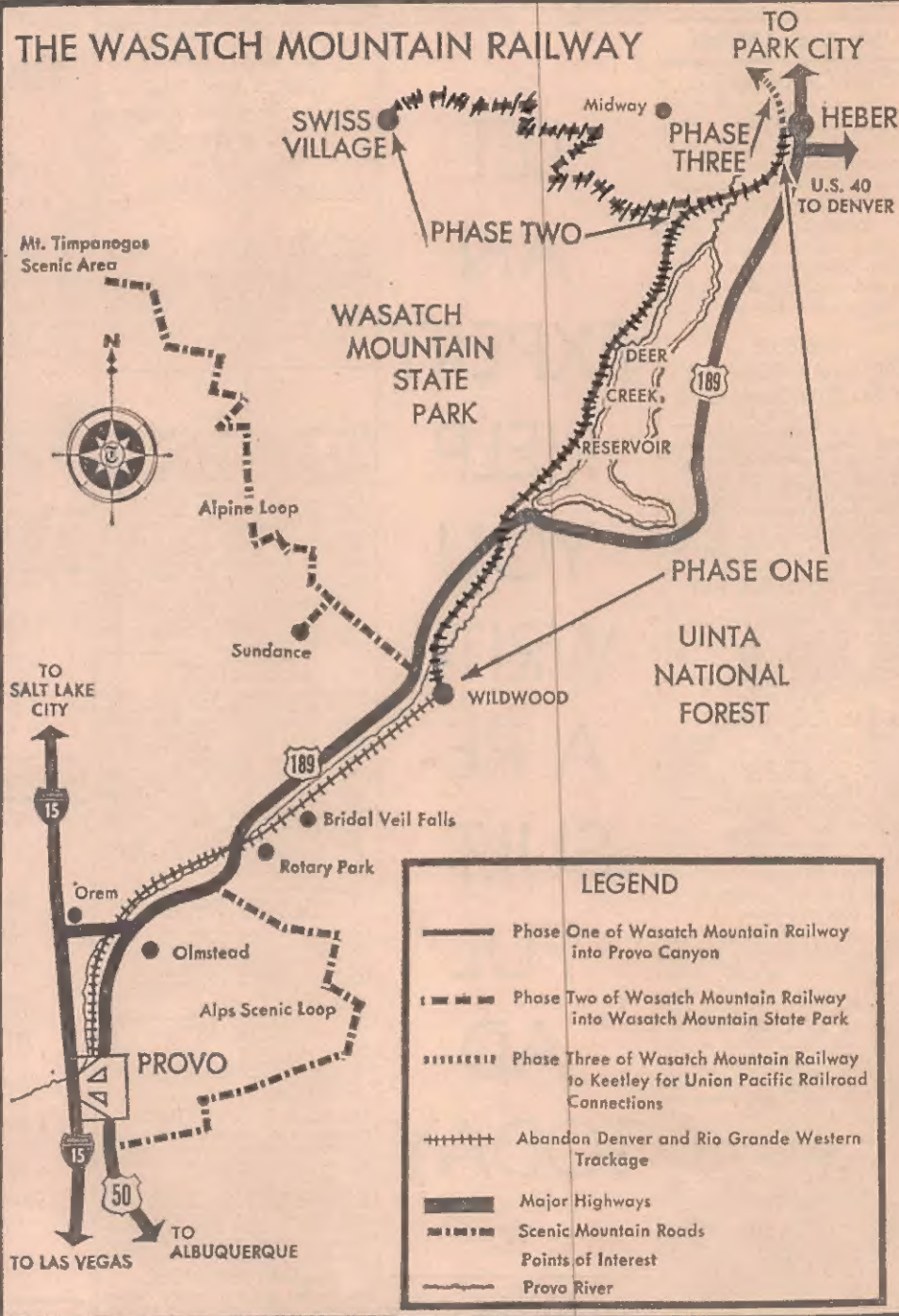
Plans are completed for the project from the mouth of the canyon to Nuns, about $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles up the canyon, including construction of three bridges, one at the mouth of the canyon, at Canyon Glen and at Nuns.

Cost would be about \$5 million, he said, and it is too late in the season to start such a project Mr. Lovelace said.

U.S. 189, which now runs through the canyon, will remain as a frontage road, giving access to area recreational facilities.

The proposed highway, scheduled to be constructed at least partially along the railroad right-of-way, would have access roads at the mouth of Provo Canyon, Rotary Park located a half mile below Bridal Veil Falls, Vivian Park and Wildwood.

THE WASATCH MOUNTAIN RAILWAY



Shown is route for Wasatch Mountain Railway, a steam tourist train

being planned by the Wasatch Railway Museum and Foundation, Inc.

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